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STATINTL

Swedish Colonel Gets Life Sentence as Spy

By the Associated Press

Stockholm

Swedish Air Force Col. Stig Wennerstrom was sentenced to life in prison Friday on charges of spying against Sweden for the Soviet Union.

The sentence, Sweden's most severe in peacetime, was handed down 10 days before Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev was due in Stockholm on a good-will visit.

When Wennerstrom was arrested a year ago, Premier Tage Erlander said relations between Sweden and the Soviet Union had been seriously disturbed by the case. But recently he declined to comment when asked how this might affect Mr. Khrushchev's visit.

Wennerstrom was arrested after 14 years of espionage activities in Moscow, Washington, and Stockholm.

His activity was mainly directed against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, he said.

Eligible for Parole in '74

Wennerstrom received notice of the sentence from the Central Criminal Court in a special steel and concrete prison "bunker" in which he has been kept since a suicide attempt.

He will be eligible for parole after 10 years.

The court stripped Wennerstrom of his Air Force rank and ordered him to pay 490,350 crowns — nearly \$100,000 dollars in damages.

Wennerstrom's mostly secret trial opened April 9. About 900 pages of police investigation and interrogation have been released but 2,800 pages have been stamped secret.

According to the prosecution, Wennerstrom started his spy career during World War II for the Germans and switched to the Soviets after the Battle of Stalingrad.

Guilt Admitted

Prosecutor Werner Ryhning said Wennerstrom spied for the Soviet Union for "hundreds of thousands of dollars." He accused Wennerstrom of handing over at least 160 top Swedish defense secrets to the Soviets.

Wennerstrom admitted guilt on all but minor charges. Although he said the United States and its NATO allies were his chief spy targets, he was tried only for the betrayal of Swedish secrets.

Wennerstrom was Swedish aid attaché in Washington from 1952 to 1957. He told the court it was easy to collect information about United States defense industries.

When Wennerstrom's tour in Washington ended, the United States Government cited him for "exceptionally meritorious conduct."

After he returned from Washington, he held key posts in the Swedish Defense Command and Foreign Ministry. The government estimated it would cost \$50 million to replace the Swedish defense installations he betrayed.

In a news conference last July, United States Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara acknowledged that Wennerstrom might have received certain data on design of United States weapons.

"But he left this country in 1957," Mr. McNamara said, "and I am told that none of our weapons systems today have been compromised by whatever information he may have received at this time."

A Canadian source said Wennerstrom was shown North American air defenses and the Strategic Air Command facilities when he was air attaché in Washington.